

EXHIBIT F

Barbara Augsdorfer Performance Improvement Plan

Today's Date:	Oct. 7, 2021
To:	Barbara Augsdorfer
From:	Amy Condon, Local News Editor; Andria Segedy, Local News Editor
Effective Date:	Oct. 7, 2021
End Date:	Nov. 8, 2021

Purpose

The purpose of this Performance Improvement Plan is to address serious concerns regarding adherence to daily expectations and directions outlined regularly by editors as well as delivery of a finished product that meets local and company standards for journalistic integrity and quality. This plan outlines the specific criteria you must meet to improve your job performance to an acceptable level.

As a full-time news reporter for Savannah Morning News and SavannahNow.com for more than a year, you have been responsible for coverage of issues related to education and general assignment. Savannah Morning News should be the go-to source in the community for news content. That means we are expecting accurate and ready-to-publish content when submitted.

The following plan has been developed to give you the opportunity to improve your unsatisfactory performance to an acceptable level and, thereafter, to maintain satisfactory performance.

For more than a year, editors have provided you with intensive coaching and feedback about improvement needed, including weekly meetings; detailed one-on-one instruction for reporting and writing techniques; and a formal development plan in 2020. This process has been thorough and fair, with concrete points for you to address.

Additionally, leadership has crafted a new role within the newsroom meant to better fit your demonstrated skill set. Covering news in Bryan and Effingham counties is an important beat for the Savannah Morning News, as those areas are experiencing tremendous population growth and large new audiences.

Despite all of these efforts by multiple supervisors, you continue to have deficiencies in job performance.

The plan period will be 30 days beginning today, Oct. 7, 2021, and ending Nov. 8, 2021. During this period, immediate and sustained improvement is expected. If this does not occur, further corrective action up to and including the termination of your employment will result.

PERFORMANCE ISSUE

Accuracy of content

Expectation: News reporters must turn in fact-based reports that require minimal CQing by editors and are publish-ready upon filing.

Example/history: The Sept. 27 weekly COVID-19 in schools update that featured an inaccuracy in the lead that required a correction; the daily COVID-19 update stats that showed the cumulative totals of cases had not been updated for an extended period of time.

Impact: When you deliver incorrect and inaccurate content and it is published, it does tremendous harm to your credibility as well as the credibility of every news reporter on staff. Repeated errors undermine the trust of this publication within the community.

PERFORMANCE ISSUE

Sourcing and bias in reporting

Expectation: News reporters must approach each story with a sense of discovery and without preconceived notions about the subject matter. The job of the reporter is to present facts fairly and to seek out and present multiple views on the subject matter, thereby providing the reader with a rounded overview of the subject matter and multiple voices. Cultivating sources from numerous corners of the beat is important for the finished piece.

Example/history: After more than a year on this beat, your depth of sources has not improved nor has the outreach to other experts who may broaden the content of your reporting. Your team leader has found the lack of attribution a regular problem when you make general statements in your articles.

Your recent Facebook exchanges with parents regarding school COVID-19 data ("don't ask, don't tell" in regards to reporting cases) demonstrated that even when voices are there, you are not recognizing them and the value they bring. Also, related to that specific conversation, your assumptions led the story and drove the message, rather than the data. They pointed this out to you. This was not an isolated incident. You frequently write ledes and headlines for articles that are biased toward one source's opinions. Your team leader regularly has reviewed this with you and has had to rework ledes unsupported in your articles.

Impact: When you approach a story with a conclusion in mind, you risk coming away with an incomplete and unfair narrative. Scant sourcing results in thin reporting and only one view. Both combine to hurt the newspaper's reputation as the most trusted source on particular subject matter and to hinder our ability to grow readership. It also can lead to corrections and retractions.

PERFORMANCE

Professionalism

Expectation: News reporters must demonstrate journalistic ethics and professionalism in interacting with the public as they represent not only themselves but the news publication.

Example/history: Your interactions during event coverage as well as with sources virtually have not met expectations.

* At a school board meeting where in-person graduation during the pandemic was mentioned, you were focused on another topic and missed that major information. In-person graduation being an important story during a pandemic, and you were later told you needed to include that in the story you wrote.

* When school restarted this fall, you were told by a school staffer who the principal was and where the principal was within view. Then you approached the person and asked who they were instead of introducing yourself from the start.

* Your recent text to Sen. Ben Watson: "Yeah. Hey. Hi. So yeah, I was told to give you a call and talk about the proposal for the Clarence Thomas statue. So can you give me a little background. When I got the press release and, you know, he's from Savannah, which is really cool. I didn't know that. Um, so, walk me through the process you know what's going to happen and what's the process and cost and all that stuff."

Impact: When you approach sources, you must remember you are always a reporter. When you treat information cavalierly or ignore pertinent data, you harm your own credibility as well as that of the news publication.

PERFORMANCE ISSUE

Meeting deadlines, both with enterprise reports and daily breaking news.

Expectation: News reporters must excel under intense deadline pressure in a rapidly changing environment. Meeting deadlines is the result of proper planning and time management, a must for reporters in a digital news environment.

Example/history: Recently, even with two editors and a regular contributor assisting you with sources and information, it took you days on a story about the death of Savannah Arts Academy band director Federico Foster. In addition, it has been more than month since you produced a premier subscriber only story, with the exception of the salary databases.

You have repeatedly failed to submit content in a timely manner after the meeting/event has ended.

Impact: When you do not meet deadlines, the newspaper's credibility as the top source for news is compromised and we fall short on readers' expectations for reporting and in-depth coverage of the community. Failure to quickly report event and breaking news results in other local news websites delivering the takeaways first.

PERFORMANCE ISSUE**Following processes and workflows.**

Expectation: You must follow newsroom processes and workflows for planning and budgeting documentation.

Example/history: Your week-ahead planning document is often more a to-do list than a content budget and historically lacks deadlines for filing planned stories. Your team leader has asked you multiple times to put dates when these weekly stories will be turned. As recent as the Sept. 23 file, only two of the 10 stories had dates on them.

Impact: Proper planning and documentation about those plans is critical in the fast-moving news industry. When you do not adhere to expectations for recording what you're working on, including story slugs and descriptions, your content cannot be planned for publication. When you do those tasks incorrectly, editors must spend extra time tracking down your content. Frequently, they have to make last-minute adjustments when a story has been delayed but you have not communicated that or reflected the delay on budgets and planning documents.

PERFORMANCE ISSUE**Communicating with editors.**

Expectation: You must be self-motivated and self-directed, communicating appropriate and needed information to your editor throughout the reporting process.

Example/history: You have been asked to check in and update your assignment editor daily, particularly regarding what is in-process and what your deliverables are for the day and the next day. You have on occasion pushed back against your editor for calling you for updates prior to 10 a.m. despite knowing the daily planning meeting happens prior to that time. You have been given the option to communicate updates to the editor at the end of the previous day's shift but have been inconsistent in doing so.

It is not uncommon for you to stop work on a planned article and start on a new story, resulting in several partially completed stories, none of which are ready for publication.

Impact: A reporter must be trusted to complete tasks as defined during the planning and inform the editor immediately when delays occur. When editors are not informed, they must do extra work to make changes at the last minute or beyond.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXPECTATIONS**The following are the minimum expectations for your position as a general assignment news reporter covering Bryan and Effingham counties.**

- Complete weekly schedule for enterprise stories by end of day Wednesday for your plan for the following week. Include filing deadlines.
- ☐ Communicate daily with your assignment editor by telephone or face-to-face to provide updates on the progress of stories and challenges you are facing. Respond promptly to inquiries, particularly telephone calls during working hours.
- ☐ Document contact with a minimum of three new sources each week, including two who are not government officials (i.e. mayors, city council members, school board members, police chiefs,

city managers). Record their name, contact information and their area of expertise. Share that sourcing list with your assignment editor.

- ☐ Stories involving different views / opinions must include opposing views and the supporting information.
- ☐ Provide all documentation that verifies the accuracy of your work to your assignment editor when filing a story. Use the list provided by your editor.
- ☐ Copy and submit to your editor via email all social media posts you create in the process of performing your job. This does NOT include personal posts.
- ☐ Have at least one enterprise story in the works at all times.
- ☐ Have at least one follow-up story in the works at all times, with a completion rate of at least one per week.
- ☐ Meet with editor each Thursday to review your n the following day (“what we’re working on today in Bryan and Effingham”). This should be a brief overview of what you discuss in your daily check-in.
- ☐ Update your planning document and the Presto planning card when things change with your stories.
- ☐ Create budget lines and Presto planning cards for stories as soon as you know about a story.
- ☐ Meet all deadlines.
- ☐ Complete the Daily Performance Improvement Plan Checklist at the end of each shift.

DELIVERABLES

You must complete the **Daily Performance Improvement Plan Checklist** at the end of each shift to note your progress on the expectations.

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

During the plan period, Andria or another editor will review the checklist daily and will review with you during the weekly meeting. Issues of great urgency will be discussed as they occur.

If you fail to satisfactorily meet any expectation of the plan, you will be subject to further performance management or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Barbara, your editors are here to support you and your efforts to be successful, but it is ultimately your responsibility to meet these expectations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

By signing below, you acknowledge that the information contained here has been presented to you and discussed with you. You understand immediate and sustained improvement must be shown in the performance areas within 30 days, and you must maintain all other areas of performance, or further corrective action up to and including the termination of your employment will result. You acknowledge

that you have been provided with a copy of this plan for your records, and that your signature below is an acknowledgment of the delivery of the plan, not your agreement with the plan.

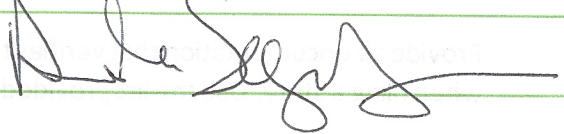
Manager Signature:	
Date:	

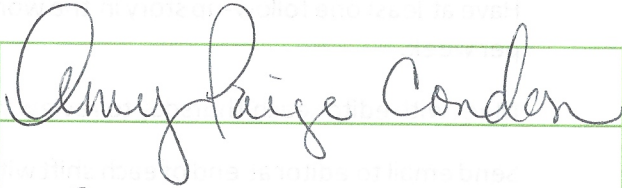
2 nd Level Manager Signature:	
Date:	

Employee Signature:	
Date:	

cc:	Local HR Business Partner to file in Employee File
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Manager Signature:	
Date:	Oct. 7, 2021

2 nd Level Manager Signature:	
Date:	Oct. 7, 2021

Employee Signature:	
Date:	10-07-2021

cc:	Local HR Business Partner to file in Employee File
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